




Speech By
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MEMBER FOR BROADWATER

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**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTORAL (IMPLEMENTING STAGE 2 OF
BELCARRA) AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL**

ELECTORAL AND OTHER LEGISLATION AMENDMENT BILL

 **Mr CRISAFULLI** (Broadwater—LNP) (5.09 pm): I rise to make a contribution to this cognate debate. I had intended to go through the bills clause by clause and focus on the nitty-gritty of the changes. I was happy to let slide what was the most humiliating backdown. Then I listened to the member for Sandgate's contribution. I will not allow the record to stand without correction. I will not allow the worst local government minister that this state has seen since Andrew Fraser attempt to lecture me on local government.

The mastermind of the 18 minutes consultation that delivered us the change in state legislation now comes into this House and tries to defend the indefensible. I will not allow his humiliation to go unchecked. When I first saw this bill up for debate I thought to myself, 'My goodness. How are we going to debate such a magnificently large change under the stewardship of two ministers in six hours?' That is no longer relevant, because today the minister has been so humiliated that the two most major changes that we are here to debate have been pulled out from under him.

In his contribution the minister attempted to ridicule me because the first bit of legislation I brought into this place was to hand power from me—from my desk—to elected officials in every community in this state. I stand by every one of those. I will tell members why. Faced with a choice between somebody sitting in an office in Brisbane and an elected mayor who is accountable to his or her community, I will take the elected mayor every day of the week. Faced with a choice between an elected mayor who is accountable to his or her community and an unelected chief executive officer, I will take the elected mayor every day of the week.

I will not allow the minister to use Belcarra to besmirch the vast majority of people in local government. The minister should not suggest that the changes made in 2012 were the green light to allow one mayor in one council, who is a member of the same political party as the minister, to suddenly become dodgy. I will tell members what those changes did. Those changes allowed a mayor to issue a direction to get things done in their community. Those changes allowed a mayor, when he or she got a phone call, rather than cower in a corner, to stand up and do what is right.

Those changes also allowed a committee of three to make a direct appointment of senior staff. These committees comprised the chief executive officer—as it should, because that is the person the staff member will report to; the mayor—as it should, because that is the first citizen in every community and the person whom people look up to; and either the deputy mayor or the committee chair where there is a direct report—as it should, because that is the person to whom that unelected official would be working. If somehow those changes were scary, that was lost on local government because they supported it.

Do members know who was the biggest supporter of those changes? It was a gentleman by the name of Tony McGrady, a former mayor of Mount Isa and a former Speaker of this parliament. He was one of the first people to come to me and say, 'I sat in the House you now sit in. I was a mayor before

and have gone back to being a mayor. There just isn't the ability for me to do what I want to do in my community.' Tony McGrady might not share my values in politics, but he shares my values about the importance of local government. That is more than can be said for the current minister, who has not stood up for local government. Today he marched up to Cairns to deliver a humiliating backdown. Do members know what I really like? I like that he said the Premier was very receptive. I read 'very receptive' as, 'I got a lashing and I'm here to do somebody else's bidding.' I will tell members what I like about the Premier being very receptive. When the Premier decided that if it was good enough for councils to not be able to take developer donations—that level of government that actually approves developments—then it would be good enough for this House, she said—

I will not make rules for local councils that I am not prepared to follow myself ...

That means that for the election in 2024, if this lot opposite are re-elected, there can be only one of two options. Under the standard that has been set by the Premier, either councils will be duped and after this election they will have CPV forced on them or this minister will reverse the decision to force people against their wishes to embark on compulsory preferential voting. It can only be one of the two. Is it local government that is being told furrphies or is it people in this House? It sends a shiver up my spine that this House can force on councils a set of rules that we are not prepared to abide by ourselves because of nothing more than politics.

The other key changes are those to allow the Deputy Premier to save face. I will not go into those in depth because the shadow Attorney-General did a masterful job. Those changes remove the conflict of interest that we saw exposed. Not since this House changed laws to allow Gordon Nuttall to not have his date with destiny have we seen a set of rules designed around one individual, but there we are. I thank the shadow local government minister for her forensic analysis of these changes.

A government member: Forensic analysis.

Mr CRISAFULLI: It was. I take that interjection. I hope it was made in good spirit. Finally, I will speak briefly on the changes proposed by the Attorney-General. As the shadow Attorney-General has said, many of these changes are supported and are not significant in nature, but I want to touch on the changes to the prisoner voting system. The Attorney-General has mentioned that we are the only state that prohibits prisoners from voting. The Attorney-General says that the changes bring us into line with other states. I make two points for the Attorney's consideration. Firstly, our changes in most cases exceed the minimum threshold set by other states by three times. I would question whether that is overreach. The Attorney, in a well-researched and well-articulated point, mentioned that the changes align us with federal laws. She did not mention the different length of time. We are proposing three times longer.

Mrs D'Ath: That is not correct. Maybe you want to actually spend some time doing some research.

Mr CRISAFULLI: Does the Attorney believe that these changes make for a better and more democratic Queensland? Are Queenslanders better served by allowing prisoners to vote? Will the quality of people who come into this room be higher if we allow prisoners to vote? If the Attorney could answer that question—not talk about aligning with other jurisdictions or whether the federal government won or lost something—and say that our state would be better off because of these changes, the LNP would take a different view.

In closing, the LNP supports the changes through Belcarra. Sadly, under the guise of Belcarra a minister who has been humiliated on so many things has sought to change the metrics of local government. The reason the minister is attempting to change the metrics of local government is that he does not understand it, he does not respect it and he believes that too many people in that tier of government are independent thinkers who do not kowtow to his views. As a result, he will continue to neuter the level of government closest to the people.